

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

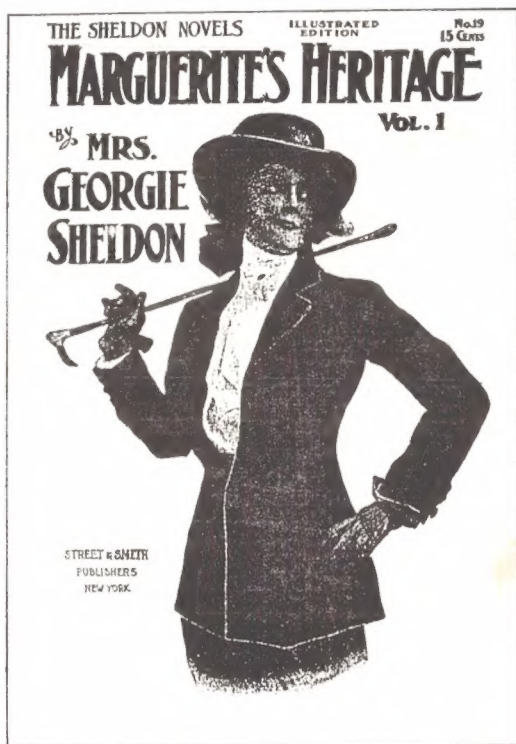
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## DOC SAVAGE AND AMERICAN HISTORY

By Leonard E. Huller



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #248

SHELTON NOVELS

Publisher: Street & Smith, 79-89 Seventh Ave., New York, NY. Issues: 39. Dates: July 1, 1913, to February 1, 1915. Schedule: Semi-monthly. Pages: 250-300. Size: 7 x 5". Price: 15¢. Illustrations: Colored pictorial cover, usually of a lady. Contents: Reprint of love stories by Mrs. Georgie Sheldon (Sarah E. Downs).

## DOC SAVAGE AND AMERICAN HISTORY\*

By Leonard E. Hullar

In 1933 the United States was in the depths of its worst economic crisis, the Great Depression. No accurate government statistics were compiled at the time, but historians of the period estimate that probably as high as fifteen million people were out of work, approximately one third to one fourth of the nation's work force. By 1933 the dispossessed milled about in the streets, jobless men gathered on corners to wait for work, homeless families wandered about in search of jobs or erected temporary shelters, and hungry people stood in long lines to receive a meager meal. In the midst of this human tragedy, Doc Savage, physical and mental marvel, appeared in "The Man of Bronze," the first of 181 novel-length adventures published in the pages of *Doc Savage Magazine* from 1933 to 1949. In these adventures, Doc and his five friends were called upon to fight evil at home and around the world. At a cost of ten cents an issue, readers joined in on these exploits.

Street and Smith published *Doc Savage Magazine* on a monthly basis in the thirties then every other month by the late forties, and dropping to a quarterly rate in the publication's final year, 1949. During these years, the price rose from ten to twenty-five cents. The character was created by Street and Smith executive Henry W. Ralston and editor John L. Nanovic. However, the development and guiding creative force for Doc Savage was author Lester Dent. Writing under the house name Kenneth Robeson, Dent wrote the majority of these adventure novels and often had a hand in those written by others such as Ryerson Johnson, Laurence Donovan, William Bogart, and Harold Davis. The character and the magazine were a great success. In fact, the character has been so successful that by the end of 1990 all of Doc's pulp adventures will have been reprinted in paperback by Bantam Books.

Clark Savage, Jr., was a mental and physical marvel reared by scientists from birth to be the supreme adventurer. He and his assistants were committed to the mission planned by the young Savage's father "to go here and there, from one end of the world to the other,...striving to help those who need help, and punishing those who deserve it." (THE MAN OF BRONZE, Bantam, page 9). Savage was over six feet tall, muscular, symmetrical, handsome, yet rugged, and bronzed by tropical suns. His hair was a slightly deeper bronze than his skin and laid to his head as a skull cap. One of the hero's most interesting features was his eyes which "were like pools of flake-gold" (THE SECRET IN THE SKY, Bantam, page 3) that could hypnotize a man in moments. Besides his superhuman strength and abilities, Clark Savage was also a man of tremendous intellect. His expertise ranged from aerodynamics to zoology. However, his most outstanding accomplishments lay in the field of surgery, hence the nickname "Doc."

Doc lived on the 86th floor of the tallest skyscraper in New York City surrounded by an immense library and complex laboratory. Under the building was a large garage which housed his private fleet of trucks and cars. He also owned a large warehouse on the Hudson River where he kept his many aircraft and boats. For the purpose of undisturbed research and study, Doc possessed a large secret dwelling in the arctic known as his

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"Fortress of Solitude." While at this secluded haven, Doc Savage could not be contacted and he contacted no one. Another of his important buildings was a complex called the "Crime College." This institution was hidden away in up-state New York for the purpose of reforming the many criminals he captured during his adventures.

Obviously Doc Savage was an extremely wealthy man. While he owned controlling interests in numerous corporations, his most important source of wealth was an unlimited supply of gold guarded by a tribe of ancient Mayans in the jungles of Central America. Since the gold was available to Doc at his request by radio broadcast, money was no object in Doc Savage's war on crime.

A brief run down of some of Doc's other characteristics and accomplishments will serve to illustrate his larger than life persona. He was able to speak fluently almost every language and dialect in the world. He had memorized the maps for every major city in the world. Even in the midst of the most frantic adventures, Doc exercised for two hours every day. This exercise routine included physical and mental activities as well as various techniques designed to heighten his senses to near supernatural ability. While he was extremely charitable, Doc rarely showed any emotions. However, he did have a bad habit of making an unusual trilling sound in moments of stress or discovery. He refused to carry a gun and was opposed to taking human life but did employ a wide variety of gadgets in his crusades. In short, he was the supreme adventurer.

Amazing by himself, he was assisted by five friends who were surpassed only by Doc Savage. One of the five was a Monk, a scarred, apish man who worked wonders in the field of chemistry. Another member of the group was Ham, an elegant dresser, complete with sword cane, and possibly the greatest lawyer ever to emerge from Harvard. These two aides carried on a constant feud that provided a measure of comic relief throughout the series. Monk and Ham worked with Doc in more adventures than the other three supporting characters: Johnny, a slender and verbose archaeologist and geologist; Long Tom, a pale, thin electrical expert; and Renny, an engineer with huge fists and a solemn expression. These five, combined with occasional assistance from Doc's beautiful cousin, Patricia Savage, formed the effective force led by Doc Savage, the man of bronze.

Clark Savage, Jr., and friends were enjoyable and exciting fictional creations. The fast paced tales of action and adventure that featured these characters were entertaining for readers during their original run in *Doc Savage Magazine*. They remain entertaining today in Bantam paperback reprints. Certainly his adventures provided a wonderful source of escapist entertainment for readers facing hardships of the Great Depression, horrors of World War II, and Cold War era tensions that followed. However, their escapist nature does not fully explain the popularity then nor account for his enduring presence forty years after the final appearance of *Doc Savage Magazine*. Concerning the escapist nature of games in the 1930s, Warren Sussman has written, "Too often...these...are explained as the search for escape—a truism to be sure—when they demand more fundamental analysis in terms of *kind* of escape they propose." (THE THIRTIES, page 194). This is also true of Doc Savage and the pulp magazines. Analysis must go deeper than merely an explanation of these stories as escapist entertainment. Doc Savage was more than adventure and escape for a portion of the reading public. He was a reflection of that public's needs, hopes, dreams, and ideas.

One American characteristic which persisted in spite of generalized national depression was a tradition of individualism. Correspondingly, Americans tended to perceive failure as personal not social. One historian



of the period has noted this belief that "success can be achieved by some adjustment, not in the social order, but in the individual." (Alexander, NATIONALISM, page 23). Doc's method of rehabilitating captured criminals mirrored this belief in personal reform to achieve success. Sending these individuals to his "crime college," he performed delicate brain surgery obliterating all memory of and inclination toward crime. The excriminals were then retrained in principles of honesty and good citizenship, taught a trade, and released into a world they had been molded to fit. Like the reading public, Doc Savage didn't question American values and society, but rather provided reaffirmation at a time when that society and its values had faltered.

Doc's seemingly unlimited wealth and power also lent support to this belief that success or failure depended on the individual. The man of bronze was not only superhuman but also a super capitalist. One example of his financial resources is found in the 1933 adventure PIRATE OF THE PACIFIC. When having difficulty securing cooperation from a ship's captain, Doc instructs him to radio the owners of the vessel. Upon contacting his superiors, the captain is ordered to follow the bronze man's wishes up to and including turning over his command if requested. The incident is explained as follows:

Doc and Renny returned to the royal suite. Renny eyed Doc curiously. "Just what kind of pull have you got with the company that runs this boat, anyhow?"

"Some months ago the concern got pinched for money," Doc said slowly, reluctantly. "Had it ceased operating, several thousand men would have been out of jobs. A loan of mine tided them over." (PIRATE OF THE PACIFIC, Bantam, pages 69-70)

Other adventures inform readers that Doc owned the skyscraper housing his headquarters, a New York newspaper, as well as an airline and other corporate interests. The system had not failed for Doc Savage. His example demonstrated that through virtue and self-improvement (not to mention a vast fortune in Mayan gold) any man could improve his situation.

This attitude was also evident in Doc's daily routine of exercises: "Two hours each day, Doc exercised intensively all his muscles, senses and his brain." (THE MAN OF BRONZE, Bantam, page 5) "Never for a day during his lifetime had that training slackened." (THE POLAR TREASURE, Bantam, page 14) One continuing feature of the magazine for several months includes descriptions of Doc's exercises implying readers might achieve similar results. Doc's success verified the gospel of self-help preached in such phenomenally popular books of the decade as Dale Carnegie's HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE. America's dream of rags-to-riches endured and it was up to the individual to pursue it.

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal brought multitudes of government programs to the depressed nation. New Deal agencies provided some relief and recovery, but also brought increased social tensions regarding the survival of that rugged American individualist. For his readers, Doc helped ease strain brought on by increasing government action in traditionally private sectors by pointing out one could both conform to social situations and remain a striking individual. His mind, body, and personality were fantastic, yet, while remaining an individual, he conformed well to the society of New Deal America.

Doc Savage expressed very little emotion. He rarely allowed himself the luxury of sorrow or fear. In THE PHANTOM CITY he is attacked by four Arabs with the following result: "Doc Savage studied the four. His bronze features did not change expression; the quartet might have been putting on

some kind of a show, for all the excitement he showed." Doc characterized Roosevelt's statement that the nation's only fear was fear itself. During the depression, the American people could not give in to emotionalism. It was a time for commitment to work, self improvement, America, and fellow Americans. Doc Savage was committed to them all.

The many acts of charity performed by Doc Savage throughout his career exemplified another American value; the ideal of community. Enduring the hardships brought on by the depression, people sensed a new need for strong personal ties. Family and community relations grew closer. Doc was part of this spirit; acts of charity and goodwill ranged from building and maintaining free hospitals to small personal activities such as reported in *THE SECRET IN THE SKY*. When he stops to purchase a paper, Doc notices that the newsboy is cross-eyed.

"Wear glasses?" he asked. He had a remarkable voice; it seemed filled with a great controlled power.

"Sure," said the newsboy. "They give me headaches."

Doc Savage produced a small business card. The card was not white, but bronze, and the printing—his name only was on it—was in a slightly darker bronze.

"If I asked you to do something," he queried, "would you do it?"

"Betcha boots!" replied the newsboy.

Doc Savage wrote a name and address on the card and said, "Go see that man," then walked on, leaving the boy puzzled.

The name and address the bronze man had written was that of an eye specialist whose particular forte was afflictions such as the boy had.

As we saw earlier in the example from *PIRATE OF THE PACIFIC*, Doc also secured jobs by bailing out companies in financial difficulty. He also created jobs by the thousands through investments and large scale construction projects such as the railroad he plans to build at the end of *THE MYSTERY ON THE SNOW*. These acts of goodwill in the midst of a busy life can be viewed as a reflection of the needs and attitudes of a nation suffering through a depression. Even Doc Savage, the supreme adventurer, had time to stop and help in the middle of saving the world.

By almost all accounts the 1930s were the best years for the man of bronze. Beautiful covers by Walter M. Baumhofer and Robert G. Harris captured the interest of prospective buyers with fast-paced action of the adventure novels matching the excitement of the cover art. Doc amazed readers with his fantastic adventures and superhuman abilities. By the late '30s Doc Savage had begun to undergo changes. The character, while still a man of incredible strength and intellect, became less the superman and a bit more human. The magazine itself began to undergo changes as well. First the size and page count were reduced in 1938 and then further reduced to digest size in 1944. While the magazine returned to the larger pulp format in the final year of publication, the character never quite returned to the glory years of the Great Depression. Doc Savage remained a hero throughout his 181 published adventures but the '40s Doc was different in small ways. As World War II ended the depression, it also brought an end to Doc's career as a superman. The more human man of bronze was less reliant on gadgets, made mistakes and errors in judgment, seemed to lose some of his fluency with languages, and began to show occasional flashes of emotion—including fear. While these changes might not be obvious to the casual reader, the wartime Doc had grown with his reading public. The spectre of a Nazi super race and the very real horrors of war required a more realistic and believable hero.

Doc's wartime adventures were a mixture of war related tales along with the usual stories of crime, mystery, and adventure. Even the non-war related adventures were filled with references to the war and the sense of patriotism



shared by Americans during these years. Doc and his friends were constantly frustrated by the fact that the military would not allow them to enlist. The government considered the man of bronze too valuable for special assignments to allow him to see direct military action. Of course, this was necessary to explain to wartime readers why Doc and his associates were not in the military. "Draft dodger" became an added description for some of the thugs encountered in the novels. Readers were also reminded about the importance of wartime security, rationing, and the presence of spies among the population. The war was an almost constant presence in the stories from these years—indirectly and directly.

Special assignments often brought Doc Savage into direct contact with our enemies during World War II. With the shorter length of the stories, fewer characters were needed so that rarely were all the aides present in any one adventure. Monk and Ham were almost always on hand but the others were often away involved in special war projects of their own. The man of bronze undertook a wide variety of operations during the war including the rescue of Churchill, the pursuit of Adolf Hitler, and many covert actions at home, abroad, and behind enemy lines. As during the depression, everyone had to do their part in the war effort. Clark Savage, Jr., certainly did what he could but perhaps the heroics of real American servicemen cast a shadow over these fictional exploits.

As the war ended, Doc became involved in a number of espionage assignments. In addition to his usual business of "righting wrongs and punishing evil-doers," he found it necessary to involve himself in international intrigue. We find him tracking down a lost atomic bomb, preventing World War III, and even tangling with the cold war threat of Communist Russia. Most of the post-war novels were tough, tight, mystery-suspense stories. In fact, for a while the magazine title was altered to read *Doc Savage—Science Detective*. By this time publication had dropped to every other month. In 1949, the magazine became quarterly and the final three Doc adventures saw print as the publication returned to the original pulp size with striking covers by George Rozen. It was the final year for *Doc Savage Magazine* but not the final year for Doc Savage.

Seemingly the character lay dormant through the decade of the '50s. Perhaps those "happy days" did not need a bronze hero as badly as the '30s and '40s. Or, perhaps, more and more Americans found their heroes on the movie screens and in paperback novels. However, some Doc Savage fans will tell you that those old magazines were well read during the 1950s—passed from person to person and circulated through second-hand magazine shops. In any event, the memory remained alive.

Just as the man of bronze had originally burst upon the scene of depression America in 1933, Doc Savage returned triumphant in 1964 amidst the social and political upheaval of the '60s. As the Baumhofer covers had attracted readers in the '30s, the paperback covers of James Bama captured the attention of readers in the '60s. While these wonderful Bama covers might have been the initial attraction for book buyers, this is not what held them to the series in the months and years to come. The marvelous action-packed whirlwind adventures and wonderful characters brought faithful followers back each month. It was simply good fun and more!

Just as Doc Savage had provided more than fun and escape for his followers during the Great Depression, it was no coincidence that his return came during the troubled 1960s. At a time when some of the country's basic assumptions seemed in doubt, Doc still stood for truth, justice, honesty, morality, fair play, and success. Riots and civil disorder created a climate of confusion and insecurity. To make matters worse, there was no tangible "enemy" to blame for our troubles. However, Doc's enemies

were real. The good guys and bad guys were clearly discernible, and what was more, the good guys won. Good triumphed over evil every month in a new DOC SAVAGE paperback. Bantam books continues to reprint this series and will publish the final reprint volume in the fall of 1990. Obviously, the appeal of the character and the stories remain.

Certainly there are many factors explaining the enduring popularity of Doc Savage throughout the years. No small part of the explanation rests with Lester Dent's abilities to write exciting tales of action and adventure as well as create and develop a captivating leading character with a colorful supporting cast. First and foremost, the Doc Savage stories are entertaining. However, while I wouldn't want to overstress the point, I believe the character's popularity goes beyond entertainment. For over fifty years, the man of bronze has served to reinforce many of the basic American values upon which we were reared. I hope he will continue to do so for the generations that follow.

#### AN INFORMAL NOTE ON SOURCES

The primary source material is found in DOC SAVAGE novels reprinted by Bantam Books. Scholarly works quoted are Charles C. Alexander's NATIONALISM IN AMERICAN THOUGHT, 1930-1945 (Rand McNally & Co., 1969) and THE THIRTIES, by Warren I. Sussman, in THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AMERICAN CULTURE, edited by Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970). Works specifically related to Doc Savage include: THE MAN BEHIND DOC SAVAGE, edited and published by Robert Weinberg (1974), and DOC SAVAGE: HIS APOCALYPTIC LIFE, by Philip José Farmer (Doubleday, 1973). Other, more general, works regarding the pulps and Doc are Ron Goulart's AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE PULP MAGAZINE, AMAZING PULP HEROES, by Frank Hamilton and Link Hullar (Gryphon Publications, 1988), FAVORITES, by Link Hullar and Frank Hamilton (Tattered Pages Press, 1989), and the incredible works of Robert Sampson which include the multi-volume YESTERDAY'S FACES series, published by Bowling Green's Popular Press. Any pulp related material by Sampson or Will Murray is important and worthy of attention. There is also a wealth of information in the pages of pulp fan publications such as *Echoes*, *Golden Perils*, *Nemesis*, *The Pulp Collector*, *Pulp Vault*, and others. Will Murray's "The Secret Kenneth Robeson," in *Duende* #2 remains one of the finest pieces of pulp research to date.

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#### THE MERRIWELL MIRACLE MAN

By Sid Moses

Born on October 25, 1866, in Cortinna, Maine, truly Gilbert W. Paten, or better known as Burt L. Standish, wrought miracles with his writings. He was tall—6 feet, 4 inches, but in the field of juvenile literature he stood ten feet tall. His hero's athletic feats are legendary, but his prolific writing was even more amazing and unbelievable. He wrote a Merriwell story every week, and to augment his income, wrote under an assumed name. There were so many stories and pseudonyms he lost track of them. Words and ideas erupted from his mind like lava from Vesuvius.

As a boy, his parents were disappointed in him. His father wanted him to follow in his footsteps and become a carpenter. His mother would have liked him to be a minister, just as the parents of another famous



author, Horatio Alger, Jr. He had a lack-lustre school record, and ran away from home on several occasions. He read a great deal, mostly forbidden dime novels, and wanted to be accepted by his boyhood chums as "one of the boys." He hated to be called Willie. His mother caught him reading in bed at night by means of a lamp, and would scold him and confiscate the lamp. Reading these novels inspired him to try to write, and when he was thirteen he started. He earned money by carrying luggage for travelers from the railroad station to the local hotel. With the tips received, he purchased brown wrapping paper (white writing paper was too expensive) and cut it into proper size. He wrote his first stories in longhand, and then laboriously transcribed them on a superannuated typewriter. His first story was about Indians and the Wild West. His first published story was A BAD MAN, published by Beadle & Adams, who also put out the DEADWOOD DICK series. Accepted at the same time was THE PRIDE OF SANDY FLAT. He got \$6 for both, and felt quite proud of himself and was encouraged to continue. To further his education, he entered Corinna Union Academy, and to help pay for it worked two summers as a reporter.

He was married on October 25, 1886 (his birthday), to Alice C. Gardner, a school-girl acquaintance, who had sat beside his bedside all night when he was sick. He married her because he thought it was the honorable thing to do. This marriage, as well as his second ended in divorce. However, his only child—a son, Barr Patten was born of this wedlock. She helped correct his spelling and improved his grammar.

When his father became disabled, he left college to write full time. Feeling confined in the village atmosphere of Corinna, he went to New York and joined Beadle as a writer. In December, 1895, O. G. Smith, a partner in the firm suggested he write a "library" containing a series of stories to be issued every week to interest young readers. Thus was born Frank Merriwell, the name symbolic of the characteristics of his hero. Frank for openness and frankness, Merri for a happy disposition, and Well for health and vigor. The initial book was called, FIRST DAYS AT FARDALE, and took just four days to complete. Patten signed it "Burt L. Standish," the Standish being taken from THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH, a book he had read and admired. With the acceptance of the first Merriwell came a contract for \$60 a week, for which he was to write one story a week. His second contract called for \$75 a week—he asked for \$100 but was turned down with a take it or leave it stipulation. His third contract was not much better, calling for \$125 a week for the first year and \$150 for the next four years.

There was a rumor that the great Upton Sinclair wrote some of the stories, but he was a one man writer. He had no assistants or other help, although when he stopped writing Merriwell stories in 1913 because of a lack of interest, other writers carried on until 1916. He then wrote the COLLEGE LIFE series, BIG LEAGUE series, and the REX KINGDOM series under his real name, Gilbert Patten.

In New York, he was somewhat of a playboy, and met many luminaries in the field of stage and journalism, notably Col. Ingraham, writer of the BUFFALO BILL series, and Edna St. Vincent Millay. He and his wife had drifted apart and in 1898 they were divorced. His second wife was Mary Nunn, and they more or less married on a whim, with the inevitable result. In 1918 he married Carol Kramer, his one true love. After her death in 1939, he suffered a breakdown and moved to California to be near his son.

While his hero neither drank nor smoked, he was far from a teetotaler, consuming at one stage of his life a quart of whiskey a day for "medicinal" purposes. He himself never excelled at sports, but the Merriwells' (Frank, then his brother Dick, and son Chip) exploits on athletic fields and are—



nas were little short of amazing. Always in the last inning or last minute of play our hero managed to snatch victory from almost certain defeat. Week after week, year after year, the Merriwell series was the most profitable the country ever knew. The stories were highly moral—never a suggestive line in it, and the influence on young men could not be appraised too highly. The series took the young reader everywhere—Fardale, Yale, all over the United States, Europe, Alaska, Peru. Standish himself never left the United States, but gave his stories authenticity by the vast amount of research he did. From 1896, a total of 500 million copies of the Merriwell series were sold, and 800 stories written—an amazing record. He was the most important writer of the Street & Smith publishing house.

He wrote one script for the movies, "The Crown Prince's Double," starring Maurice Costello and Norma Talmadge. King features put on a Merriwell strip in 200 newspapers, and for a brief spell in the '30s there was a radio series devoted to Merriwell three times weekly. In Brooklyn, NY, a group of prominent business and professional men took time out once a month from a busy schedule to meet for lunch to discuss the Merriwell books.

His death in 1945 brought an end to a colorful figure. There will never be another "Merriwell." No other author or character gripped the American adolescents (girls as well as boys) as did Standish and Merriwell.

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## THE RIVALS: A FOOTNOTE IN STORY PAPER HISTORY

By Victor A. Berch

When the Boston-based story paper, the *Star Spangled Banner*, was launched by Justin Jones, notices appeared in local papers to announce its commencement. One such newspaper that did advertise this launching was the *Boston Daily Mail*, wherein announcements appeared within its advertising sections and a comment to the fact was made by its editor(s) in its daily column "Life In Town."

The advertisement first appeared on September 19, 1846.

On Saturday Sept. 26th will be published the first number of a new and magnificent weekly paper to be entitled the *Star Spangled Banner*, Devoted to Literature, Science, the Arts, the Drama and General Intelligence. Justin Jones, Editor ... The first number will contain the commencement of a most interesting and exciting original novellette founded on the Mexican War from the pen of HARRY HAZEL<sup>1</sup>, whose vneable [i.e., valuable] services have been engaged exclusively for this paper— beside a complete tale by W. E. Burton, Esq. Address to the Editor *Star Spangled Banner* 42 Congress street.

Apparently, the *Star Spangled Banner* hit the newsstands and news agencies before September 26th<sup>2</sup>, for in the daily column "Life In Town" the following comment was made in the September 23, 1846, *Boston Daily Mail*:

*Star Spangled Banner*. This magnificent sheet has made its appearance according to announcement. It is edited and published by Justin Jones, formerly editor of the "Flag"....

This statement concerning Jones's editorship of the *Flag* (i.e., *Flag of Our Union*) was immediately challenged by Frederick Gleason, proprietor of the *Flag of Our Union* in a letter to the editor of the *Boston Daily Mail*, which was published on the very next day, September 24, 1846:

## CORRECTION

To the Editor of the Mail

Dear Sir,—In your paper of yesterday, I observe a notice relative to a new paper just started in this city and edited by Justin Jones, which is calculated to injure THE FLAG OF OUR UNION, of which I am the proprietor. In the notice of the new paper you say "that it is edited and published by Justin Jones, formerly editor of the Flag." I beg leave to say that I have employed but one regular editor<sup>3</sup> on "The Flag of Our Union" since the first number was issued nearly a year since<sup>4</sup>, and the same gentleman is still retained in that capacity. During a temporary absence of the editor<sup>5</sup>, Mr. Jones was paid for contributing a few articles, but he has never been engaged as editor of the paper. This explanation I feel is to be due to me, more particularly because Mr. Jones, in starting his new paper, has not only copied my publication in every particular, but has adopted almost precisely the same name. In addition to that it appears he wishes to promulgate the idea that the former editor of my paper is engaged also upon his sheet. I only beg leave to be set right in this matter, and leave the public to judge as to the fairness of Mr. Jones' proceeding.

F. GLEASON

Publishing Hall, Tremont street  
Boston, Sept. 23, 1846

No sooner had this letter appeared than a sharp rebuke by Justin Jones appeared on the following day, September 25th:

## TO THE PUBLIC—FALSEHOOD

Messrs. Purdy and Bradley. In your paper of yesterday, there is a communication signed F. Gleason, in which he states that he has "employed but one particular editor on the 'Flag' since its 1st No. was issued" and also "during a temporary absence of the editor, Mr. Jones was paid for contributing a few articles." Now, sir, here is a *gross misrepresentation* and I marvel much at the foolishness and barefacedness of Mr. G. in publishing it. I was employed by him as *SOLE* editor of the Flag, and was paid not for a few articles, but for *every article* that appeared as editorial, as well as for *original stories* that were published on his first page. This I can *prove* by persons who worked as compositors on the paper. When Mr. G. employed me, he said nothing about a *limited* period; had he done so, I should have declined having anything to do with him. If he intended any such thing his fault is the greater, for he grossly deceived me. But this is not where the "shoe pinches" and all his talk about adopting *his* name is moonshine—for we had the title of the "STAR SPANGLED BANNER in our mind long before his paper was started. He might as well have said we have copied after the "Standard," "Gospel Banner" or "American Flag" as after him. The people will understand the matter and let them be the judges whether we have copied his paper "in every particular" by comparing the "Flag" with the "Star Spangled Banner!" If Mr. G. wishes to wage a war of words, "*let him come on—we are armed!*"

JUSTIN JONES

Editor of the "Star Spangled Banner"  
82 Washington street

Evidently, there was much truth in Jones' statement. There is no information in the sparse biography on Jones' life<sup>6</sup> to indicate that he had served as an editor of the *Flag of Our Union*, as short a time as it may have been. Needless to say, Gleason did not pursue the matter further.

A stiff rivalry between the two papers continued for over a decade, when the *Star Spangled Banner*, after periodic changes in publishers, edi-



tors and locations, disappeared from the Boston scene. Gleason, who owned the copyrights to some of the earlier works of "Harry Hazel," must have taken great delight in being able to reissue them for profit during this period of rivalry.

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "HARRY HAZEL" is a known pseudonym used by Justin Jones. It is more than likely that this first tale to appear in the *Star Spangled Banner* was "Inez, the Beautiful; or, Love on the Rio Grande. A Mexican Military Romance." This tale was published as a separate booklet by Jones, in 1846, and is the only such of Hazel's works that would fit the description in the advertisement. Other publications by "Harry Hazel" for 1846 include imprints of the United States Publishing Company, a firm associated with Gleason, and Gleason's Publishing Hall.

<sup>2</sup> It was not unusual for these weekly papers to have a lead time for publication. That is, they actually were at the periodical depots and news agencies some days before the actual date on the publication.

<sup>3</sup> This was Maturin M. Ballou, a.k.a. Lieutenant Murray. An advertisement in the *Boston Daily Mail*, September 24, 1846, reads as follows: \$100 Prize Tale. The *Flag of Our Union* for the present week contains the commencement of a deeply interesting prize tale by Lieut. Murray entitled "The Spanish Musketeer", a story of those times in the West Indies from whence the author has just returned... F. Gleason, Publisher.

<sup>4</sup> The publication date for the first number of the *Flag of Our Union* was January 24, 1846.

<sup>5</sup> Near the end of June, or early in July, 1846. Maturin M. Ballou embarked on a trip to Havana, Cuba. At that time, Ballou was employed by the *Boston Olive Branch* as its Havana correspondent. A series of letters appeared in that publication from July 18, through October 3, 1846, covering his trip to Havana, Cuba; New Orleans, LA; Louisville, KY; and Buffalo, NY. Permission was granted for these letters to be reprinted in the *Flag of Our Union* (see the *Olive Branch*, August 8, 1846) and Letter No. 1, which had appeared on July 18, was reprinted in the *Flag of Our Union* on August 8, 1846. From this we may assume Justin Jones filled the editorial chair of the *Flag of Our Union* from mid-1846, probably until such a time as he was ready to launch the *Star Spangled Banner* in September, 1846.

<sup>6</sup> For a concise biographical sketch of Justin Jones, see "Retrospective Notes," by A Literary Detective, *Dime Novel Roundup*, Vol. 57, No. 5 (December, 1988), pages 93 & 94.

\* \* \* \* \*

## VICTOR ST. CLAIR

By Willis Edwin Hurd

(From *Golden Hours*, 1890s)

Still on the sunny side of life, a place which he will always hold in himself—a thorough optimist—and in the hearts of all his readers, who like the admirable style and plots of his many stories, Victor St. Clair stands with the best of American juveniles.

When I first met the man, more than two years ago, I was struck by his jovial and fraternal disposition; and when I came to know him more, I discovered in Mr. St. Clair the good story-teller and companion; the hard

worker with brain and muscle; the direct sympathizer with others in their literary work; in short, the man who is as nearly ideal in his friendship as one usually finds an acquaintance and moreover, a person with high ideals in his own labor.

In all ways modest, he stoutly asserts that he has no biography, but that his life is the every-day occurrence of the ordinary litterateur. Be that as it may, no writer breathes who is not of interest to those who love and admire him through his published works.

Mr. St. Clair is a thorough New Englander, descended from a line of hardy Yorkshire farmers who moved to this country in the latter part of the seventeenth century and became the pioneers and scouts who penetrated the wilderness of the Northeast in the stirring times of the French and Indian wars. Victor was brought up on a farm, and in those early days of life in wood and field acquired the sterling blood which is so necessary to him in the weeks of continued sedentary life, for he is now a dweller in the city, and subsists by the pen alone.

When but a boy of three or four years in his teens he began writing stories, and was as proud as any lad could be when he showed the father who had faith in his literary genius the first check obtained for a product of his brain. And when, ere he was twenty years of age, Victor handed his parent a story in pamphlet form which he had written of evenings after a hard day's work on the farm, and for which he had received fifty dollars, the old gentleman declared that his son might write stories if he wished, for he would not oppose him longer.

A few years later young St. Clair went to the city, where he obtained an editorship on a juvenile monthly, which established his reputation as a writer of boys' stories. The venture was sold out to and combined with another publication in a few years, but by this time the young author had come to a realization of the value of his own literary output, and was determined to make the "boy heroes" of romance supply his every necessity. As I stated elsewhere that determination fathered a sturdy child.

Early in his career Mr. St. Clair was an extremely rapid composer, as he can be now if occasion demands. Five thousand words a day hardly reached his regular stint. But in later years he became much more careful and painstaking, believing that merit should invariably overshadow quantity.

He never begins a story without first spending considerable time in making himself familiar with the geography of the scenes, for no story of his is laid in a purely imaginative locality. Then he draws as best he can a map of the district, marking each locality carefully, in order to make himself thoroughly at home in it. The characters are next selected, though it may be the leading ones have already come to stand out boldly on the scene. The plot is allowed to unfold with the movements, new matters and situations developing with the actions of the hero, so that it is doubtful if any reader finds greater interest in the story than the author himself. He sympathizes heartily with his work, and once begun, the writing of his story goes on freely and rapidly. To illustrate his method, it is but necessary to say that every part of the territory described in the scenes of *LITTLE HICKORY*; OR, *RAGGED BOB'S YOUNG REPUBLIC*, had been visited by Mr. St. Clair, and that he has stood in the doorway of the little sod-house where Rob and his forlorn companions passed their first night at *BREAK O' DAY*. Naturally, this broad preparation imparts a certain tone and color which would otherwise be impossible.

Like other writers, Mr. St. Clair has allowed himself the use of pen names, under some of which he has written other than juvenile work. However, under his own name he has supplied his best and most numerous manu-



scripts, amounting to three or four hundred short stories and about fifty serials, creating in himself one of the most prolific writers in New England.

He has contributed to most all the juveniles, past and present, including such well known publications as *The Argosy*, *Golden Hours*, and *Golden Days*. Some of his serials are "Captains of Honor," "Sent to Siberia," "Sons of Steel," and "Roughing it on Range and Ranch." "Won by the Wheel" appeared in *The Army and Navy Weekly*, and is, I believe, the last serial Mr. St. Clair has had published in any other journal besides *Golden Hours*. He has contributed to the last-named weekly for two or three years, and hopes to place there some of his best work in the years to come.

\* \* \* \* \*

## NEWS RELEASE

## NEWS RELEASE

## NEWS RELEASE

The Hess Collection of Dime Novels, Series Books and Pulps will host a Hess Symposium at the University of Minnesota on Saturday, June 15, 1991.

Topics for presentation and discussion will include "Trends in Dime Novel and Series Book Research," "Library Collecting Patterns and Networking for the Future," "Editing Publications," and "Scholars Using Special Collections."

Speakers tentatively scheduled include Professor Anne MacLeod, Librarians J. Randolph Cox and Paul Eugene Camp, and Editors Edward LeBlanc and Gil O'Gara.

The goals for the Symposium are to share ideas about the future of dime novel and series book research and discuss ways libraries can build on strength and network in the future.

Participants may make your own reservations at the University Radisson Hotel, which gives special rates for University-related events (612 379-8888 or 1 800 333-3333). Also within walking distance is the Days Inn (612 623-3999).

For more information, write the Hess Collection, 109 Walter Library, 117 Pleasant St. S. E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

\* \* \* \* \*

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## HORATIO ALGER'S PEN NAME OF "CANTAB"

By Irene Gurman

CANTAB may be traced back to Cambridge University in England. Its natives or residents, especially graduates of Cambridge University, were known as "Cambridgians" from the Latin *Cantabrigia*. Alger (a graduate of Harvard College, in Cambridge, Massachusetts) shortened it to Cantab for his short stories that keep turning up now and then.

\* \* \* \*

## LETTERS

Dear Eddie,

The *Dime Novel Round-Up* is as a very nice production, neat as a pin and nice to read. The word processor has been mastered.

With best wishes and kindest thoughts,

Irene Gurman

Dear Eddie,

I am amazed at how well you get the *Round-Up* set up, edited and printed. And the articles are *good*.

Best wishes,

Ralph P. Smith

Compliments and kind words from our readers are always appreciated. The neatness of this publication is due to two gentlemen in Boynton Beach, Florida: Gilbert K. Westgard II does the typesetting, and John Thomas, of Rainbow Printing, does the printing and binding.

\* \* \* \*

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